

October 9, 2012

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Great Lakes and Ohio River
Attn: Brigadier General Margaret Bercham, Commander
550 Main Street, Room 10032
Cincinnati, Ohio 45202-3222

Dear Brigadier General Bercham:

I represent Wisconsin's First Assembly District, which includes all of Door County. The Door Peninsula separates the southern part of Green Bay from Lake Michigan. In 2008, I was very involved with the passage of our state's Great Lakes Water Compact, because I was extremely concerned about the impact the diversion of water (especially from Lake Michigan) would have on our state and specifically, Door County. I believe the great lakes are an invaluable resource and need protection.

I'm writing to you today, because I'm extremely concerned about the low water levels we're currently experiencing. As you drive through the Village of Ephraim (one of the most scenic parts of Door County) you are taken back by the baron docks and people setting up lawn chairs way out into the lake. Door County is a popular tourism destination, often called the "Cape Cod of the Midwest". What lures people here is the scenic beauty and that's beginning to be in jeopardy. Many of the people who live here rely on a successful summer season to make ends meet.

I'm also extremely worried about the Detroit Harbor Navigable Channel along Washington Island. Lake levels are critically low threatening ferry service to the main land. I've been working with the Governor's office, the Department of Transportation, the Town Chair of Washington, and the ferry company to identify available funding to conduct necessary dredging. If nothing is done, I'm very concerned for the people who live and visit Washington Island.

Years ago the Army Corp of Engineers dredged the St. Clair River, which has greatly impacted water levels and caused a tremendous amount of erosion along the basin because it can't sustain the amount of water flowing through. I'm concerned these actions are partially responsible for the low water levels in Door County and I fear the condition will only get worse if it's not addressed. Over the last few weeks I have been contacted by a number of my constituents who share my same concerns.

I used to receive regular updates from the ACE about the water levels in our great lakes. I haven't received that data in some time so I would appreciate a current assessment. I would also appreciate any information/data on the cycle of the water levels over the past 10 years and any plans the ACE has to address future water levels or shortages.

Thank you in advance for your efforts to respond to my request.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Garey Bies". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a large initial 'G' and 'B'.

Garey Bies